inheritance are poorly formulated. The amount of inheritable goods is small, the more valuable 428
ones being the trap line, but no cases of real property inheritance were recorded. Indians
spoke of their children or their sons-in-law receiving a trap line but in no case had anyone
attempted to make provisions for such inheritance. Since men usually take up residence in
the wife's country, it is reasonably likely that inheritance would fall to either a man's
daughters or to his sons-in-law. Thus, Old Mike's son-in-law, upon the death of his father-in-law
died, he would obtain ownership of the trap line which he was now using, after him the
line would go to his brother-in-law, or preferably, to his brothers, who would then continue
to support his wife. This, however, was largely wishful thinking. Old Mike himself felt
that his trap line should go to both his sons-in-law. His statement, however, was not in-
tended as a testamentary disposition, and there is no evidence for believing he was much
concerned with the matter. River Joe's attitudes regarding the marital residence of his
children may be resulted as pointing to one individual's desire to insure the inheritance of
his trap line by his children. Such an impression conflicts with Old Mike's readiness to
have his property pass to sons-in-law and emphasizes the unilineal patterns of inheri-
tance. It must be remembered, however, that Old Mike has no sons and only a fifteen year
old unmarried daughter. He also has two sons-in-law already trapping on his line, whereas
three of River Joe's sons-in-law have set themselves up independently.*

Other goods left by a deceased are generally kept by the surviving spouse who may sell
them or apportion them among her children according to sex, a woman's objects going to
girls, and a man's to boys. Inherited property so disposed of includes mainly dogs, guns,
traps, snowshoes, tools, jewelry, and clothing. A deceased child's possessions, including
clothes, are divided among the siblings. No report was heard of disputes over inheritance.

Government

Lacking governmental institutions of their own, the Kaska Indians are subject to the 428
Dominion Government and, depending on their location, to the local government of Yukon
Territory or the Province of British Columbia. In the present section we are chiefly con-
cerned to the Indian's relationship to these governments. We will emphasize the individual's
attitudes toward federal and local authorities rather than discuss the functions of these
authorities in any detail.

The Kaska Indians are, with a few exceptions, wards of the Dominion of Canada. The 457
exceptions are the relatively few women who, having legally married white men, were
enfranchised as citizens and the one or two young men who have had their status removed
from the "Indian list," i.e., successfully petitioned for the status of citizenship. Such indi-
viduals often deny that they are Indians and emphasize their equal to white status.

In general, the people regard the administrative government as a "boss" whose functions 461
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* In a letter dated January 2, 1944, F. H. Kelly, Game Commissioner of British Columbia states "Should the father of a trap line die without making any provision with regard to the transfer of the line, then the line had been successfully taken under the control of the Game Commissioner for the district and generally such officer assigns the line and has the trapper transferred to a district of the deceased father, or he gives the opportunity to sell the trap line and equipment. Where a line has been started therefrom may be issued from the Game." In Yukon Territory, where trap lines are not registered, assignments following death is probable. Conflict by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, when called in this situation.

1: Honigmann K-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

are manifold. Thus, referring to the impending visit of the forestry inspector from Whitehorse, Edward Prince also remarked that everything has a boss. "People have boss, grass have boss, even stick [that is, timber] have boss!" To understand the attitudes of the Indian toward governmental authority, the significance of this word, "boss," must be thoroughly understood.

Within the native community, no man can exercise absolute power over any other adult. Parents are "boss their children," and it is even said that a man is "boss his wife," but the authority of these roles is not arbitrary and rarely abused. Furthermore, between adults authority has no meaning. An individual responds to the suggestions of another individual only when he stands to gain by such submission or when he cannot tactfully refuse agreement without endangering the harmony of his relationship to the other person. Obedience of an adult to the suggestions of another member of the Indian community never occurs because the suggestion possesses a status which of itself requires submission. Between Indians of equal status, that is, of relatively the same degree of maturity and of the same sex, a thorough-going laissez faire prevails. Considered by itself, the Indian community is an anarchic society in which every adult claims autonomy and independence. For example, Old Silas once sent a message to his neighbor, Louis Silas, asking the latter to join him in a moose hunt. Louis went on the hunt but almost immediately decided to turn back, because he was worried about his father-in-law's health. When apprised of this decision, Old Silas said to Albert: "It's up to you. I'm an old man and I can't see to shoot moose. I hoped we would hunt together but you do what's right. It's up to you." These last words, "Up to you," are frequently heard when adults discuss plans and come to a disagreement. A person with richer experience may state his reasons for disapproving of a projected course of action, but if a younger man does not choose to heed the advice, the matter will usually be dropped. Obviously there are men who try to make their will prevail, who are dominant and assertive. Such men may hold authority within a group of brothers and their wives, but throughout the rest of the community they are generally disliked.

The English verb, "to boss," is used by the Kaska with two different connotations. When used in the sense of exerting authority it often connotes criticism or disapproval. In its wider meaning, however, the term denotes the right and ability to order and use for an object, animal, place, or person. Usually, as we have indicated, government is conceived of as a boss in the first sense, as a meddling and bothersome authority whose sovereignty is sometimes even heeded as illegitimate. Thus Old Sam complained vigorously that the government did not help the Indians. He denied governmental sovereignty over the area, and referred to the legitimate authority of a Ground Boss who would someday arise once to repair his dominion. No Indian admits or accepts the authority of a government to control his thinking. Such authority is perceived as presumptuous and autocratic. In terms of the prevailing economic of Kaska social life, it is almost inevitable that any activities of the Dominion and local governments in pursuit of their regulative functions should be unwanted and productive of anxiety. This situation was especially aggravated during the summer of 1949, when reports reached Lower Post that a white man had been arrested around the Tahltan Indian Reserve on Telegraph Creek, 150 miles south of Lower Post. Although the ostensible reason for the arrest was to determine Indian lands and permit